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A proper job for the FBI

The Central Intelligence Agency's function, as spelled out in the National Security Act of 1947, is to gather foreign intelligence. The legislation specified that "the agency shall have no police, subpoena, law-enforcement or internal security functions."

Despite these prohibitions, the CIA has acknowledged to Rep. Edward Koch of Manhattan that it has trained about 50 policemen from 12 domestic agencies during the past two years in such areas as wiretap detection, organization of intelligence files and handling of explosives. ✓

The CIA contends such training violates neither the letter of the spirit of the law.

But even if it doesn't, it would seem to us that the CIA is ill-advised to undertake such responsibilities. Gathering domestic intelligence and training local departments in these and other areas of police work have long been the legal responsibilities of the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

The FBI has done its job exceedingly well, just as the CIA has performed admirably in its assigned field. That's the way it should remain.